

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A seamless, tubular food casing which is blown in an area ratio of from 1:2 to 1:10, produced from a thermoplastic mixture which comprises a) thermoplastic starch, a thermoplastic starch derivative or a mixture thereof and b) at least one other polymer selected from the group consisting of ~~a homo- or copolymer comprising hydroxycarboxylic acid units~~, a polyesterurethane, a polyetherurethane, a polyesteretherurethane and a polyalkylene carbonate of the formula $[\text{CHR}^1\text{-CHR}^2\text{-O-CO-O}]_n$, where R^1 and R^2 independently of one another are a hydrogen atom or a ($\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$) alkyl radical and n is an integer from 10 to 5000, a weight ratio of a:b being in a range from 90:10 to 10:90.

14. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the thermoplastic starch derivative is a starch ester.

15. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 14, wherein the starch ester comprises a starch alkanoate.

16. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 14, wherein the starch ester comprises a starch acetate.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the weight ratio a:b is in the range from 20:80 to 80:20.

19. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the weight ratio a:b is in the range from 40:60 to 60:40.

20. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the thermoplastic mixture comprises at least one plasticizer and wherein a proportion of plasticizer(s) present in the thermoplastic mixture is up to 30% based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture.

21. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 20, wherein the plasticizer comprises glycerol, diglycerol, sorbitol, polyethylene glycol, citric acid triethyl ester, acetylcitric acid triethyl ester, glycerol triacetate, a phthalic ester or sorbitol monoester or sorbitol diester.

22. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 20, wherein the proportion of plasticizer present in the thermoplastic mixture is up to 15% by weight, based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture.

23. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the thermoplastic mixture comprises at least one lubricant and wherein a proportion of lubricant(s) present in the thermoplastic mixture is up to 12% by weight based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture.

24. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 23, wherein the lubricant comprises a vegetable fat or a vegetable oil, a synthetic triglyceride, lecithin, an ethoxylated fatty alcohol or a wax.

25. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 23, wherein the proportion of lubricant(s) present in the thermoplastic mixture is from 2 to 6% by weight based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture.

26. (Currently Amended) A food casing according to claim 23, wherein the proportion of lubricant(s) present in the thermoplastic mixture is from [[from]] 3 to 6% by weight based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture.

27. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the thermoplastic mixture is mixed with fibers and wherein a proportion of fibers present in the thermoplastic mixture is up to 25% by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

28. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 27, wherein the fibers comprise fibers from cotton linters, wood pulp, from regenerated cellulose, from hemp, flax, sisal or jute.

29. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 27, wherein the proportion of fibers present in the mixture is from 2 to 15 % by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

30. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 27, wherein the proportion of fibers present in the thermoplastic mixture is from 5 to 15 % by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

31. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the thermoplastic mixture comprises fillers and wherein a proportion of fillers present in the thermoplastic mixture is up to 12% by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

32. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 31, wherein the fillers comprise, preferably calcium carbonate, talc, kaolin or anhydrite.

33. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 31, wherein the proportion of fillers present in the thermoplastic mixture is from 2 to 8% by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

34. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 33, wherein a proportion of fillers present in the thermoplastic mixture is from 4 to 8% by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

35. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 13, wherein the thermoplastic mixture comprises at least one crosslinker and wherein a proportion of the at least one crosslinker in the thermoplastic mixture is up to 20% by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

36. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 35, wherein the at least one crosslinker comprises a dicarboxylic acid, a diisocyanate or triisocyanate, a dialdehyde, a di-epoxide, a diimine or a silane or siloxane containing vinyl group(s).

37. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 35, wherein the proportion of the at least one crosslinker(s) present in the thermoplastic mixture is from 0.5 to 10% by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

38. (Previously Presented) A food casing according to claim 35, wherein the proportion of the at least one crosslinker(s) present in the thermoplastic mixture is from 1 to 5% by weight based on the total weight of the mixture.

39. (Currently Amended) A food casing according to claim 13, ~~wherein~~ wherein the food casing is provided with an internal preparation and/or external preparation.

40. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a food casing as claimed in claim 13, comprising extruding the thermoplastic mixture through an annular die and blowing it in an area ratio of from 1:2 to 1:10.

41. (Previously Presented) A method of using a food casing according to claim 13 as synthetic sausage casing.

42. (Previously Presented) A seamless, tubular food casing which is blown in an area ratio of from 1:2 to 1:10, produced from a thermoplastic mixture which comprises a) thermoplastic starch, a thermoplastic starch derivative or a mixture thereof and b) at least one other polymer selected from the group consisting of a homo- or copolymer comprising hydroxycarboxylic acid units, a polyesterurethane, a polyetherurethane, a polyesteretherurethane and a polyalkylene carbonate of the formula $-\text{[CHR}^1\text{-CHR}^2\text{-O-CO-O-]}_n$, where R^1 and R^2 independently of one another are a hydrogen atom or a $(\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4)$ alkyl radical and n is an integer from 10 to 5000, wherein a weight ratio of a:b is in a range from 90:10 to 10:90 and wherein the food casing remains stable on exposure to hot water.

43. (Previously Presented) A seamless, tubular food casing according to claim 42, wherein the food casing remains stable on exposure to boiling water.

44. (Previously Presented) A seamless, tubular food casing which is blown in an area ratio of from 1:2 to 1:10, produced from a thermoplastic mixture which comprises a) thermoplastic starch, a thermoplastic starch derivative or a mixture thereof and b) at least one other polymer selected from the group consisting of a homo- or copolymer comprising hydroxycarboxylic acid units, a polyesterurethane, a polyetherurethane, a polyesteretherurethane and a polyalkylene carbonate of the formula $-\text{[CHR}^1\text{-CHR}^2\text{-O-CO-O-]}_n$, where R^1 and R^2 independently of one another are a hydrogen atom or a ($\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$) alkyl radical and n is an integer from 10 to 5000, wherein a weight ratio of a:b is in a range from 90:10 to 10:90 and wherein component b is present in an amount sufficient to render the food casing stable on exposure to hot or boiling water.